

Mr. Foote as Jack Tringus.



When I consider the vast Importance.

Act Ist

Published by J. Harrison & C^o June 1st 1779.

(engraved)

Printed for

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THE

COMMISSARY.

A

COMEDY.

As it is Acted at the

THEATRE-SROYAL

IN

Drury-Lane and Covent-Garden.

Written by SAMUEL FOOTE, Esq.



L O N D O N :

Printed for HARRISON and Co. No 18, Paternoster-Row; and Sold, likewise, by
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M DCC LXXIX;

Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

Mr. ZAC. FUNGUS.

Mr. ISAAC FUNGUS.

Mr. GRUEL.

YOUNG LOVEIT.

Dr. CATGUT.

SIMON.



Mr. BRIDGON.

Mr. PADUATTOY.

Mr. HARPY.

LA FLEUR.

JORN.

A Hackney-Coachman.

W O M E N.

Mrs. MECHLIN.

Mrs. LOVEIT.

DOLLY.

JENNY.

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THE COMMISSARY.

ACT I.

SCENE I. Mrs. Mechlin's House.

(Loud Knocking at the Door.)

Enter Jenny.

RAP, rap, rap, up stairs and down, from morning to night; if this same Commissary stays much longer amongst us, my mistress must e'en hire a porter. Who's there?

Simon without.

Sim. Is Mrs. Mechlin at home?

Jen. No. [Opens the door.] Oh, what is it you, Simon?

Enter Simon.

Sim. At your service, sweet Mrs. Jane.

Jen. Why you knock with authority; and what are your commands, Master Simon?

Sim. I come, Madam, to receive those of your mistress. What, Jenny, has she any great affair on the anvil? Her summons is most exceedingly pressing; and you need not be told, child, that a man of my consequence does not trouble himself about trifles.

Jen. Oh, Sir! I know very well you principal actors don't perform every night.

Sim. Mighty well, Ma'am; but notwithstanding your ironical sneer, it is not every man that will do for your mistress; her agents must have genius and parts: I don't suppose, in the whole bills of mortality, there is so general and extensive a dealer as my friend Mrs. Mechlin.

Jen. Why, to be sure, we have plenty of customers, and for various kinds of commodities; it would be pretty difficult I fancy to——

Sim. Commodities! Your humble servant, sweet Mrs. Jane; yes, yes, you have various kinds of commodities, indeed.

Jen. Mr. Simon, I don't understand you; I suppose it is no secret in what sort of goods our dealing consists.

Sim. No, no, they are pretty well known.

Jen. And to be sure, though now and then, to oblige a customer, my mistress does condescend to smuggle a little——

Sim. Keep it up, Mrs. Jane.

Jen. Yet there are no people in the liberty of Westminster that live in more credit than we do.

Sim. Bravo.

Jen. The very best of quality are not ashamed to visit my mistress.

Sim. They have reason.

Jen. Respected by the neighbours.

Sim. I know it.

Jen. Punctual in her payments.

Sim. To a moment.

Jen. Regular hours.

Sim. Doubtless.

Jen. Never misses the sarmant on Sundays.

Sim. I own it.

Jen. Not an oath comes out of her mouth; unless, now and then, when the poor gentlewoman happens to be overtaken in liquor.

Sim. Granted.

Jen. Not at all given to lying, but like other tradesfolks, in the way of her business.

Sim. Very well.

Jen. Very well! then pray, Sir, what would you insinuate? Look you, Mr. Simon, don't go to cast reflections upon us; don't think to blast the reputation of our——

Sim. Hark ye, Jenny, are you serious?

Jen. Serious! Ay, marry am I.

Sim. The devil you are!

Jen. Upon my word, Mr. Simon, you shoud not give your tongue such a licence; let me tell you, these airs don't become you at all.

Sim. Hey-day! why where the deuce have I got, sure I have mistaken the house; is not this Mrs. Mechlin's?

Jen. That's pretty well known.

Sim. The commodious, convenient Mrs. Mechlin, at the sign of the Star, in the parish of St. Paul's?

Jen. Bravo.

Sim. That commercial caterpillar?

Jen. I know it.

Sim. That murderer of manufactures?

Jen. Doubtless.

Sim. That walking warehouse?

Jen. Granted.

Sim. That carries about a greater cargo of contraband goods under her petticoats than a Calais cutter?

Jen. Very well.

Sim. That engrosser and seducer of virgins?

Jen. Keep it up, master Simon.

Sim. That forestaller of bagnios!

Jen. Incomparable fine!

Sim. That canting, cozening, money-lending, match-making, pawnbroking——[Loud knocking.]

Jen. Mighty well, Sir: here comes my mistress, she shall thank you for the pretty picture you have been pleased to draw.

Sim. Nay, but dear Jenny——

Jen. She shall be told how highly she stands in your favour.

Sim. But, my sweet girl—— [Knock again.]

Jen. Let me go, Mr. Simon, don't you hear?

Sim. And can you have the heart to ruin me at once?

Jen. Hands off.

Sim. A peace, a peace, my dear Mrs. Jenn, and dictate the articles.

Enter Mrs. Mechlin, followed by a Hackney-Coachman, with several Bundles, in a Capucelin, a Bonnet, and her Clothes pinned up.

Mrs. Mech. So, huffy, what must I stay all day in the streets? Who have we here! the devil's in the wench, I think—one of your fellows, I suppose—Oh, is it you! how fares it Simon?

Jen. Madam, you should not have waited a minute, but Mr. Simon—

Sim. Hush, hush! you barbareous jade—

Jen. Knowing your knock, and eager to open the door, flew up stairs, fell over the landing-place, and quite barr'd up the way.

Sim. Yes, and I am afraid I have put out my angle.—Thanks, Jenny; you shall be no loser, you flut.

Mrs. Mech. Poor Simon—Oh, Lord have mercy upon me, what a round have I taken!—Is the wench petrified? why don't you reach me a chair, don't you see I'm tired to death?

Jen. Indeed, Ma'am, you'll kill yourself.

Sim. Upon my word, Ma'am Mechlin, you should take a little care of yourself; indeed you labour too hard.

Mrs. Mech. Ay, Simon, and for little or nothing: only victuals and clothes, more cost than worship.—Why does not the wench take the things from the fellow?—Well, what's your fare?

Coach. Mistress, it's honestly worth half a crown.

Mrs. Mech. Give him a couple of shillings, and send him away.

Coach. I hope you'll tip me the tetter to drink?

Mrs. Mech. Them there fellows are never contented; drink! stand farther off; why you smell already as strong as a beer-barrel.

Coach. Mistress, that's because I have already been drinking.

Mrs. Mech. And are not you ashamed, you sot, to be eternally guzzling? You had better buy you some clothes.

Coach. No, mistress, my honour won't let me do that.

Mrs. Mech. Your honour! and pray, how does that hinder you?

Coach. Why, when a good gentlewoman like you, cries, Here, coachman, here's something to drink—

Mrs. Mech. Well!

Coach. Wou'd it be honour in me to lay it out in any thing else? No, mistress, my conscience won't let me; because why, it is the will of the donor, you know.

Mrs. Mech. Did you ever hear such a blockhead!

Coach. No, no, mistress; tho' I am a poor man, I won't forfeit my honour; my cattle, tho' I love 'em, poor beasts, are not more dearer to me than that.

Mrs. Mech. Yes, you and your horses give pretty strong proofs of your love and your honour; for you have no clothes on your back, and they have no flesh.—Well, Jenny, give him the six-pence—there, lay it out as you will.

Coach. It will be to your health, mistress; it shall melt at the Meuse, before I go home: I shall be careful to clear my conscience.

Mrs. Mech. I don't doubt it.

Coach. You need not.—Mistress, your servant.

[Exit Coachman.]

Mrs. Mech. Has there been any body here, Jenny?

Jenny. The gentleman, Ma'am, about the Gloucestershire living.

Mrs. Mech. He was; Oh, oh! what I suppose

his stomach's come down. Does he like the im-
cumbrance? will he marry the party?

Jen. Why that article seems to go a little against him?

Mrs. Mech. Does it so? then let him retire to his Cumberland curacy: that's a fine keen air, it will soon give him an appetite. He'll stick to his honour, too, till his cassock is wore to a rag.

Jen. Why, indeed, Ma'am, it seems pretty rusty already.

Mrs. Mech. Devilish squeamish, I think; a good fat living, and a fine woman into the bargain! You told him a friend of the lady's will take the child off her hands?—

Jen. Yes, Madam.

Mrs. Mech. So that the affair will be a secret to all but himself. But he must quickly resolve, for next week his wife's month will be up.

Jen. He promised to call about four.

Mrs. Mech. But don't let him think we are at a loss for a husband; there is to my knowledge a merchant's clerk in the city, a comely young man, and comes of good friends, that will take her with but a small place in the Custom-house.

Jen. He shall know it.

Mrs. Mech. Ay, and tell him, that the party's party has interest enough to obtain it whenever he will. And then the bridegroom may put the purchase-money too of that same presentation into his pocket.

Jen. Truly, Ma'am, I should think this would prove the best match for the lady.

Mrs. Mech. Who doubts it?—Here, Jenny, carry these things above stairs. Take care of the cigarette, leave the watch upon the table, and be sure you don't mislay the pearl necklace; the lady goes to Mrs. Cornelly's to night; and, if she has any luck, she will be sure to redeem it to-morrow.

Sim. What a world of affairs! it is a wonder, Madam, how you are able to remember them all.

Mrs. Mech. Trifles, mere trifles, master Simon.—But I have a great affair in hand—Such an affair, if well managed, it will be the making of us all.

Sim. If I, Ma'am, can be of the least use—

Mrs. Mech. Of the highest! there is no doing without you—You know the great—

Enter Jenny.

Jen. I have put the things where you ordered, Ma'am.

Mrs. Mech. Very well, you may go. [*Ex. Jen.*] I say, you know the great Commissary, that is come to lodge in my house. Now they say this Mr. Fungus is as rich as an Indian governor: Heaven knows how he came by it! but that, you know, is no business of ours. Pretty pickings, I warrant, a road. [*Loud knocking.*] Who the deuce can that be? But let it be who it will, you must not go till I speak to you.

Enter Jenny.

Jen. The Widow Loveit, Ma'am.

Mrs. Mech. What, the old liquorish dowager from Devonshire-square? Shew her in. [*Ex. Jen.*] You'll wait in the kitchen, Simon, I shall soon dispatch her affair. [*Exit Simon.*]

Enter Mrs. Loveit.

Mrs. Lov. So, so! good morning to you, good Mrs. Mechlin.—John, let the coach wait at the corner.

Mrs. Mech. You had better sit here, Madam.

Mrs. Lov. Any where. Well, my dear woman, I hope you have not forgot your old friend—Ugh, ugh, ugh—[*Coughs.*] Consider I have no time to lose, and you are always so full of employment.

Mrs. Mech. Forgot you! you shall judge, Mrs. Loveit. I have, Ma'am, provided a whole cargo of husbands for you, of all nations, complexions, ages, tempers, and sizes: so you see you have nothing to do but chuse.

Mrs. Lov. To chuse! Mrs. Mechlin; Lord help me, what choice can I have? I look upon wedlock to be a kind of a lottery, and I have already drawn my prize; and a great one it was! My poor dear man that's gone, I shall never meet with his fellow.

Mrs. Mech. 'Pshaw! Madam, don't let us trouble our heads about him, it's high time that he was forgot.

Mrs. Lov. But won't his relations think me rather too quick?

Mrs. Mech. Not a jot; the greatest compliment you could pay to his memory; it is a proof he gave you reason to be fond of the state. But what do you mean by quick! Why he has been bury'd these three weeks—

Mrs. Lov. And three days, Mrs. Mechlin.

Mrs. Mech. Indeed! quite an age!

Mrs. Lov. Yes; but I shall never forget him; sleeping, or waking, he's always before me. His dear swell'd belly, and his poor shrunk legs! Lord bless me, Mrs. Mechlin, he had no more calf than my fan.

Mrs. Mech. No!

Mrs. Lov. No, indeed; and then, his bit of a purple nose, and his little weazen face as sharp as a razor—don't mention it, I can never forget him.

[Cries.]

Mrs. Mech. Sweet marks of remembrance, indeed. But, Ma'am, if you continue to be so fond of your last husband, what makes you think of another?

Mrs. Lov. Why, what can I do, Mrs. Mechlin? a poor lone widow-woman as I am: there's no body minds me; my tenants behind-hand, my servants all careless, my children undutiful—Ugh, ugh, ugh—[Coughs.]

Mrs. Mech. You have a villainous cough, Mrs. Loveit; shall I send for some lozenges?

Mrs. Lov. No, I thank you, it's nothing at all; mere babit, just a little trick I've got.

Mrs. Mech. But I wonder you should have all these vexations to plague you, Madam; you, who are so rich, and so—

Mrs. Lov. Forty thousand in the four per cents. every morning I rise, Mrs. Mechlin, besides two houses at Hackney; but then my affairs are so weighty and intricate; there is such tricking in lawyers, and such torments in children, that I can't do by myself; I must have a helpmate; quite necessary, no matter of choice.

Mrs. Mech. Oh, I understand you, you marry merely for convenience; just only to get an assistant, a kind of a guard, a fence to your property?

Mrs. Lov. Nothing else.

Mrs. Mech. I thought so; quite prudential; so that age is none of your object; you don't want a scampering, giddy, sprightly, young—

Mrs. Lov. Young! Heaven forbid. What, do you think, like some ladies I know, that I want to have my husband taken for one of my grandchildren; no, no; thank Heaven, such vain thoughts never enter'd my head.

Mrs. Mech. But yet, as your matters stand, he ought not to be so very old neither; for instance now, of what use to you would be a husband of sixty?

Mrs. Lov. Sixty! are you mad, Mrs. Mechlin, what do you think I want to turn nurse?

Mrs. Mech. Or fifty-five?

Mrs. Lov. Ugh, ugh, ugh—

Mrs. Mech. Or fifty?

Mrs. Lov. Oh! that's too cunning an age; men, now-a-days, rarely marry at fifty, they are too knowing and cautious.

Mrs. Mech. Or forty-five, or forty, or—

Mrs. Lov. Shall I, Mrs. Mechlin, tell you a piece of my mind?

Mrs. Mech. I believe, Ma'am, that will be your best way.

Mrs. Lov. Why then, as my children are young and rebellious, the way to secure and preserve their obedience, will be to marry a man that won't grow old in a hurry.

Mrs. Mech. Why I thought you declar'd against youth?

Mrs. Lov. So I do, so I do; but then, six or seven and twenty is not so very young, Mrs. Mechlin.

Mrs. Mech. No, no, a pretty ripe age; for at that time of life, men can baffle and flir, they are not easily check'd, and whatever they take in hand they go through with.

Mrs. Lov. True, true.

Mrs. Mech. Ay, ay, it is then they may be said to be useful; it is the only tear and wear season.

Mrs. Lov. Right, right.

Mrs. Mech. Well, Ma'am, I see what you want, and to-morrow about this time, if you'll do me the favour to call—

Mrs. Lov. I shan't fail.

Mrs. Mech. I think I can suit you.

Mrs. Lov. You'll be very obliging.

Mrs. Mech. You may depend upon't, I'll do my endeavours.

Mrs. Lov. But, Mrs. Mechlin, be sure don't let him be older than that, not above seven or eight and twenty at most; and let it be as soon as you conveniently can.

Mrs. Mech. Never fear, Ma'am.

Mrs. Lov. Because, you know, the more children I have by the second venter, the greater plague I shall prove to those I had by the first.

Mrs. Mech. True, Ma'am. You had better lean on me to the door; but, indeed, Mrs. Loveit, you are very malicious to your children, very revengeful, indeed.

Mrs. Lov. Ah, they deserve it; you can't think what sad whelps they turn out; no punishment can be too much; if their poor father could but have foreseen they would have—why did I mention the dear man! it melts me too much. Well, peace be with him.—To-morrow about this time, Mrs. Mechlin, will the party be here, think you?

Mrs. Mech. I can't say.

Mrs. Lov. Well, a good day, good Mrs. Mechlin.

Mrs. Mech. Here, John, take care of your mistress.

[Exit Mrs. Loveit.]

A good morning to you, Ma'am.—Jenny, bid Simon come up.—A husband! there now is a proof of the prudence of age; I wonder they don't add a clause to the act to prevent the old from marrying clandestinely as well as the young. I am sure there are as many unsuitable matches at this time of life as the other.

Enter Simon.

Shut the door, Simon. Are there any of Mr. Fungus's servants below?

Sim. Three or four strange fags.

Mrs. Mech. Ay, ay, some of that troop, I suppose; come, Simon, be seated.—Well, Simon, as I was telling you; this Mr. Fungus, my lodger above, that has brought home from the wars a whole

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cart-load of money, and who (between you and I) went there from very little better than a driver of carts——

Sim. I formerly knew him, Ma'am.

Mrs. Meck. But he does not know you?

Sim. No, no.

Mrs. Meck. I am glad of that——this spark, I say, not content with being really as rich as a lord, is determin'd to rival them too in every other accomplishment.

Sim. Will that be so easy? why he must be upwards of——

Mrs. Meck. Fifty, I warrant.

Sim. Rather late in life to set up for a gentleman.

Mrs. Meck. But fine talents, you know, and a strong inclination——

Sim. That, indeed——

Mrs. Meck. Then I promise you he spares for no pains.

Sim. Diligent?

Mrs. Meck. Oh, always at it. Learning something or other from morning to night. My house is a perfect academy; such a throng of fencers, dancers, riders, musicians——but, however, to sweeten the pill, I have a fellow-feeling for recommending the teachers.

Sim. No doubt, Ma'am; that's always the rule.

Mrs. Meck. But one of his studies is really diverting; I own I can't help laughing at that.

Sim. What may that be?

Mrs. Meck. Oratory.—You must know his first ambition is to have a seat in a certain assembly; and in order to appear there with credit, Mr. Whar'dye Call'em, the man from the city, attends every morning to give him a lecture upon speaking, and there is such haranguing and bellowing between them—Lord have mercy upon—but you'll see enough on't yourself; for do you know, Simon, you are to be his valet-de-chambre?

Sim. Me, Madam!

Mrs. Meck. Ay, his privy counsellor, his confidant, his director in chief.

Sim. To what end will that answer?

Mrs. Meck. The e I am coming—You are to know, that our Squire Wou'd-be is violently bent upon matrimony; and nothing forsooth will go down but a person of rank and condition.

Sim. Ay, ay, for that piece of pride he's indebted to Germany.

Mrs. Meck. The article of fortune he holds in utter contempt, a grand alliance is all that he wants; so that the lady has but her veins full of high blood, he does not care two-pence how low and empty her purse is.

Sim. But, Ma'am, won't it be difficult to meet with a suitable subject? I believe there are few ladies of quality that——

Mrs. Meck. Oh, as to that, I am already provided.

Sim. Indeed!

Mrs. Meck. You know my niece Dolly?

Sim. Very well.

Mrs. Meck. What think you of her?

Sim. Of Miss Dolly, for what?

Mrs. Meck. For what? you are plausibly dull; why, a woman of fashion, you dunce.

Sim. To be sure Miss Dolly is very deserving, and few ladies have a better appearance; but, bless me, Madam, here people of rank are so generally known, that the slightest enquiry wou'd poison your project.

Mrs. Meck. Oh, Simon, I have no fears from that quarter; there, I think, I am pretty secure.

Sim. If that, indeed, be the case——

Mrs. Meck. In the first place, Mr. Fungus has an intire reliance on me.

Sim. That's something.

Mrs. Meck. Then to baffle any idle curiosity, we are not derived from any of your new-fangled gentry, who owe their upstart nobility to your Harry's and Edwards. No, no, we are scions from an older stock; we are the hundred and fortieth lineal descendant from Hercules Alexander, earl of Gendowery, prime-minister to King Malcolm the first.

Sim. Odds! a qualification for a canon of Stratbourg. So then, it seems, you are transplanted from the banks of the Tweed; cry you mercy! But how will Miss Dolly be able to manage the accent!

Mrs. Meck. Very well; she was two years an actress in Edenborough.

Sim. That's true. Is the overture made; has there been any interview?

Mrs. Meck. Several; we have no dislike to his person; can't but own he is rather agreeable; and as to his proposals, they are greater than we could desire; but we are prudent and careful, say nothing without the earl's approbation.

Sim. Oh, that will be easily had.

Mrs. Meck. Not so easily; and now comes your part: but first, how goes the world with you, Simon?

Sim. Never worse! the ten bags of tea, and the cargo of brandy, them peering rascals took from me in Sussex, has quite broken my back.

Mrs. Meck. Poor Simon! why then I am afraid there's an end of your traffick.

Sim. Totally; for now those fellows have got the Isle of Man in their hands, I have no chance to get home, Mrs. Mecklin.

Mrs. Meck. Then you are intirely at leisure?

Sim. As a Bath turnspit in the month of July.

Mrs. Meck. You are then, Simon, an old family-levant in waiting here on the lady; but dispatch'd to the north with a view to negotiate the treaty, you are just returned with the noble peer's resolution. Prepare you a suitable equipage, I will provide you with a couple of letters, one for the lover, and one for the lady——

Sim. The contents——

Mrs. Meck. Oh, you may read them within. Now with regard to any questions, I will furnish you with suitable answers; but you have a hunger to deal with, so your cards will be easily play'd.

Exit Jenny.

Jen. Miss Dolly, Ma'am, in a hackney-coach at the corner; may she come in?

Mrs. Meck. Are the servants out of the way?

Jen. Oh, she is so muffled up and disguised, that she'll run no danger from them.

Mrs. Meck. Be sure keep good watch at the door, Jenny.

Jen. Oh, never fear, Ma'am. [Exit Jenny.]

Mrs. Meck. Simon, take those two letters that are under the furthestmost cushion in the window, run home, get a dirty pair of boots on, a great coat, and a whip, and be here with them in half an hour at farthest.

Sim. I will not fail. But have you no farther directions?

Mrs. Meck. Time enough. I shall be in the way; for it is me that must introduce you above. [Exit Simon.] So, things seem now in a pretty good train; a few hours, it is to be hoped, will make me easy for life. To say truth, I begin to be tir'd of my trade. To be sure the profits are great; but then, so are the risques that I run: be-

sides, my private practice begins to be smother'd. Ladies are suppos'd to come here with different designs than merely to look at my goods: some of my best customers too, are got out of my channel, and manage their matters at home by their maids. Those asylums, they gave a dreadful blow to my business. Time has been, when a gentleman wanted a friend, I could supply him with choice in an hour; but the market is spoiled, and a body might as soon produce a hare or a partridge as a pretty—[Enter Dolly.]—So, niece, are all things prepar'd; have you got the papers from Harry?

Dolly. Here they are, Ma'am.

Mrs. Mech. Let me see—Oh, the marriage-articles for Fungus to sign. Have you got the contract about you?

Dolly. You know, aunt, I left it with you.

Mrs. Mech. True, I had forgot: but where is the bond that I—Here it is; this, Dolly, you must sign and seal before witnesses.

Dolly. To what end, aunt?

Mrs. Mech. Only, child, a trifling acknowledgment for all the trouble I have taken; a little hint to your husband, that he may reimburse your poor aunt, for your clothes, board, lodging, and breeding.

Dolly. I hope my aunt does not suspect that I can ever be wanting—

Mrs. Mech. No, my dear, not in the least: but it is best, Dolly, in order to prevent all retro-spection, that we settle accounts before you change your condition.

Dolly. But, Ma'am, may not I see the contents?

Mrs. Mech. The contents, love! of what use will that be to you? Sign and seal, that's enough.

Dolly. But, aunt, I chuse to see what I sign.

Mrs. Mech. To see? what then you suspect me?

Dolly. No, Ma'am, but a little caution—

Mrs. Mech. Caution! Here's an impudent baggage! how dare you dispute my commands; have not I made you, raised you from nothing, and won't a word from my mouth reduce you again?

Dolly. Madam, I—

Mrs. Mech. Answer me, hussy; was not you a beggar's brat at my door; did not I, out of compassion, take you into my house, call you my niece, and give you suitable breeding?

Dolly. True, Madam.

Mrs. Mech. And what return did you make me? You was scarce got into your teens, you forward slut, but you brought me a child almost as big as yourself; and a delightful father you chose for it! Doctor Cargut, the meagre musician; that sick monkey-face maker of crotchets; that eternal trotter after all the little drabble-tail'd girls of the town. Oh, you low slut, had it been by a gentleman, it would not have vex'd me; but a fidler!

Dolly. For heaven's sake—

Mrs. Mech. After that you elop'd, commenc'd stroller, and in a couple of years return'd to town in your original trim, with scarce a rag to your back.

Dolly. Pray, Ma'am—

Mrs. Mech. Did not I, notwithstanding, receive you again? have not I tortured my brains for your good? found you a husband as rich as a Jew, just brought all my matters to bear, and now you refuse to sign a paltry paper?

Dolly. Pray, Madam, give it me, I will sign, execute, do all that you bid me.

Mrs. Mech. You will; yes, so you had best. And what's become of the child, have you done as I order'd?

Dolly. The doctor was not at home; but the

nurse left the child in the kitchen.

Mrs. Mech. You heard nothing from him?

Dolly. Not a word.

Mrs. Mech. Then he is meditating some mischief, I warrant. However, let our good stars secure us to day, and a fig for what may happen to-morrow. It is a little unlucky, tho', that Mr. Fungus has chosen the doctor for his master of music; but as yet he has not been here, and, if possible, we must prevent him.

Enter Jenny, hastily.

Jen. Mr. Fungus, the tallow-chandler, Ma'am, is crossing the way, shall I say you are at home?

Mrs. Mech. His brother has servants enough, let some of them answer. Hide, Dolly. [E. it Dolly and Jenny.]—One knock at the door. Ay, that's the true tap of the trader; this old brother of ours, tho' is smoochy and shrewd, and tho' an odd, a sensible fellow; we must guard against him: if he gets but an inklin, but the slightest suspicion, our project is marr'd.—[A noise without.] What the deuce is the matter! As I live, a squabble between him and La Fleur, the French footman we hir'd this morning. This may make mirth; I'll listen a little. [Retires.]

Enter Mr. Isaac Fungus, driving in La Fleur.

I. Fung. What, is there no body in the house that can give me an answer; where's my brother, you rascal?

La Fleur. *Je n'entend pas.*

I. Fung. Pas, what the devil is that; answer yes or no, is my brother at home? don't thrug up your shoulders at me, you—Oh, here comes a rational being.

Enter Mrs. Mechlin.

Madam Mechlin, how fares it? this hore lanthorn-jaw'd rascal won't give me an answer, and indeed wou'd scarce let me into the house.

La Fleur. *C'est gros Bourgeois a fait une tapage de diable.*

Mrs. Mech. *Fy donc, c'est le frere de monsieur.*

La Fleur. *Le frere! Mon Dieu!*

I. Fung. What is all this? what the devil linguo is the fellow a-talking?

Mrs. Mech. This is a footman from France that your brother has taken.

I. Fung. From France? and is that the best of his breeding? I thought we had taught them better manners abroad, than to come here and insult us at home. People make such a rout about smuggling their Frenchified goods; their men do us more mischief. If we could but hinder the importing of them—

Mrs. Mech. Ay, you are a true Briton, I see that, Mr. Isaac.

I. Fung. I warrant me. Is brother Zachary at home?

Mrs. Mech. Above stairs, Sir.

I. Fung. Any company with him?

Mrs. Mech. Not any to hinder your visit.—La Fleur, *ouvrez le porte.*

I. Fung. Get along you—Mrs. Mechlin, your servant.—I can't think what the devil makes your quality so fond of the monsieurs; for my part I don't see—March, and be hang'd to you—you footy-fac'd—[Exit I. Fungus, and La Fleur.]

Mrs. Mech. Come, Dolly, you now may appear.

Enter Jenny.

Jen. Mr. Paduasoy, Ma'am, the Spitalfields weaver; he has been waiting this hour, and says he has some people at home—

Mrs. Mech. Let him enter; in a couple of minutes I'll follow you, Dolly. [Exit Jenny.]

Enter Paduasoy.

Mrs. Mech. Mr. Paduasoy, you may load your self home with those silks, they won't do for my market.

Pad. Why, what's the matter, Madam?

Mrs. Mech. Matter! you are a pretty fellow indeed; you a tradesman! but it's lucky I know you, things might have been worse; let us settle accounts, Mr. Paduasoy; you'll see no more of my money.

Pad. I shall be sorry for that, Mrs. Mechlin.

Mrs. Mech. Sorry! answer me one question; am not I the best customer that ever you had?

Pad. I confess it.

Mrs. Mech. Have not I mortgaged my precious soul, by swearing to my quality-customers that the stuff from your looms was the produce of Lyons?

Pad. Granted.

Mrs. Mech. And unless that had been believ'd, could you have sold them a yard; nay, a nail?

Pad. I believe not.

Mrs. Mech. Very well. Did not, Sir, I procure you more money for your curs'd goods, when sold as the manufacture of France, than as mere English they could have ever produced you?

Pad. I never deny'd it.

Mrs. Mech. Then are not you a pretty fellow, to blow up and ruin my reputation at once?

Pad. Me, Madam!

Mrs. Mech. Yes, you.

Pad. As how?

Mrs. Mech. Did not you tell me these pieces of silk were entire, and the only ones you had made of that pattern?

Pad. I did.

Mrs. Mech. Now mind. Last Monday I left them as just landed, upon a pretence to secure them from seizure, at the old Countess of Furbelow's, by whose means, I was sure, at my own price, to get rid of them both; and who should come in last night at the ball at the Mansion-House, where my lady unluckily happen'd to be, with a full suit of the blue pattern upon her back, but Mrs. Deputy Dowlass, dizen'd out like a duchess.

Pad. Mrs. Deputy Dowlass! Is it possible?

Mrs. Mech. There is no denying the fact; but that was not all; if indeed Mrs. Deputy had behaved like a gentlewoman, and swore they had been sent her from Paris, why there the thing would have died; but see what it is to have to do with mechanicks, the fool owned she had them from you. I should be glad to see any of my customers at a loss for a lye. But those trumpety traders, Mr. Paduasoy, you'll never gain any credit by them.

Pad. This must be a trick of my wife's; I know the women are intimate, but this piece of intelligence will make a hothouse. None of my fault indeed, Mrs. Mechlin; I hope, Ma'am, this won't make any difference?

Mrs. Mech. Difference! I don't believe I shall be able to smuggle a gown for you these six months. What is in that bundle?

Pad. Some India handkerchiefs, that you promis'd to procure of a supercargo at Woolwich, for Sir Thomas Callico's lady.

Mrs. Mech. Are you pretty forward with the light sprigg'd waistcoats from Italy?

Pad. They will be out of the loom in a week.

Mrs. Mech. You need not put any Genoa velvet in hand till the end of the autumn; but you may make me immediately a fresh sortment of foreign silks for summer.

Pad. Any other commands, Mrs. Mechlin?

Mrs. Mech. Not at present, I think.

Pad. I wish you, Madam, a very good morning.

Mrs. Mech. Mr. Paduasoy! Lord, I had lik'd to have forgot! You must write an anonymous letter to the Custom-house, and send me some old silks to be seized; I must treat the town with a bonfire; it will make a fine paragraph for the papers; and at the same time advertise the public where such things may be had.

Pad. I shan't fail, Madam. [*Exit Paduasoy.*]

Mrs. Mech. Who says, now, that I am not a friend to my country! I think the society for the encouragement of arts, should vote me a premium. I am sure I am one of the greatest encouragers of our own manufactures. [*Exit Mrs. Mechlin.*]

ACT II. SCENE first continues.

Enter Commissary Fungus, Isaac Fungus, and Mrs. Mechlin.

Zac. Fun. BROTHER Isaac, you are a block-head, I tell you. But first answer me this; can knowledge do a man any harm?

I. Fun. No, farthing; what is befitting a man for to learn.

Z. Fun. To learn! and how should you know what is befitting a gentleman to learn! Stick to your trade, master tallow-chandler.

I. Fun. Now, brother Zachary, can you say in your conscience, as how, it is descent to be learning to dance, when you ha' almost lost the use of your legs?

Z. Fun. Lost the use of my legs! to see but the malice of men! Do but ask Mrs. Mechlin; now, Ma'am, does not Mrs. Dukes say, that, considering my time, I have made a wonderful progress?

I. Fun. Your time, brother Zac!

Z. Fun. Ay, my time, brother Isaac. Why I han't been at it passing a couple of months, and we have at our school two aldermen, and a serjeant at law, that were full half a year before they could get out of hand.

Mrs. Mech. Very true, Sir.

Z. Fun. There now, Mrs. Mechlin can vouch it. And pray, Ma'am, does not master allow, that of my age, I am the most hopeful scholar he has?

Mrs. Mech. I can't but say, Mr. Isaac, that the 'squire has made a most prodigious improvement.

Z. Fun. Do you hear that? I wish we had but a kit, I would show you what I could do: one, two, three, ha! One, two, three, ha. There are risings and sinkings.

Mrs. Mech. Ay, marry, as light as a cork.

Z. Fun. A'n't it? Why, before next winter is over, he says, he'll sit me for dancing in public; and who knows but in Lent, you may see me amble at a ridotto with an opera-singer.

Mrs. Mech. And I warrant he acquits himself as well as the best.

I. Fun. Mercy on me! and pray, brother, that thing like a sword, in your hand, what may the use of that implement be?

Z. Fun. This! oh, this is a foil.

I. Fun. A foil!

Z. Fun. Ay, a little instrument, by which, we who are gentlemen, are instructed to kill one another.

I. Fun. To kill! Marry, heaven forbid; I hope you have no such bloody intentions. Why, brother Zac, you was used to be a peaceable man.

Z. Fun. Ay, that was when I was a paltry me-

chance, and afraid of the law, but now I am another guest person; I have been in camps, cantoons, and intrenchments: have marched over bridges and breaches; I have seen the Ezel and Wezell; I'm got as rich as a Jew, and if any man dares to affront me, I'll let him know that my trade has been fighting.

I. Fun. Rich as a Jew! Ah, Zac. Zac. but if you had not had another guest trade than fighting, I doubt whether you would have returned altogether so rich: but now you have got all this wealth, why not sit down, and enjoy it in quiet?

Z. Fun. Hark ye, Isaac; do you pretend to know life? are you acquainted with the Beaux d'Esprits of the age?

I. Fun. I don't understand you.

Z. Fun. No, I believe not; then how should you know what belongs to gentility?

I. Fun. And why not as well as you, brother Zac. I hope I am every whit as well born?

Z. Fun. Ay, Isaac, but the breeding is all; consider I have been a gentleman above five years and three quarters, and I think should know a little what belongs to the business—hey, Mrs. Mechlin.

Mrs. Mech. Very true, Sir.

Z. Fun. And as to this foil, do you know, Isaac, in what the art of fencing consists?

I. Fun. How should I?

Z. Fun. Why it is short; there are but two rules; the first is to give your antagonist as many thrusts as you can; the second, to be careful and receive none yourself.

I. Fun. But how is this to be done.

I. Fun. Oh, easy enough: for do you see, if you can but divert your adversary's point from the line of your body, it is impossible he ever should hit you; and all this is done by a little turn of the wrist, either this way, or that way.—But I'll shew you—John, bring me a foil. Mrs. Mechlin, it will be worth your observing.—Here, brother Isaac—

[Offers him a foil.]

I. Fun. Not I.

Z. Fun. These bourgeois are so frightful. Mrs. Mechlin, will you, Ma'am, do me the favour to push at me a little? Mind, brother, when she thrusts at me in carte, I do so; and when she pushes in tierce, I do so; and by this means a man is sure to avoid being killed. But it may not be amiss, brother Isaac, to give you the progress of a regular quarrel; and then you will see what sort of a thing a gentleman is. Now I have been told, do see, brother Isaac, by a friend who has a regard for my honour, that Captain Jenkins, or Hopkins, or Wilkins, or what captain you please, has in public company call'd me a cuckold—

I. Fun. A cuckold? But how can that be? because why, brother Zac. you ben't married.

Z. Fun. But as I am just going to be married, that may very well happen, you know.

Mrs. Mech. True.

Z. Fun. Yes, yes, the thing is natural enough. Well, the captain has said, I am a cuckold. Upon which, the first time I set eyes on Captain Wilkins, either at Vauxhall, or at Ranelagh, I accost him, in a courteous, genteel-like manner.

I. Fun. And that's more than he merits.

Z. Fun. Your patience, dear Isaac—in a courteous, gentleman-like manner; Captain Hopkins, your servant.

I. Fun. Why, you call'd him, but now, Captain Wilkins.

Z. Fun. Pshaw! Your blockhead, I tell you the name does not signify nothing—Your servant;

shall I crave your ear for a moment? The captain politely replies, Your commands, good Mr. Fungus? then we walk side by side—Come here, Mrs. Mechlin—[They walk up and down.] for some time as civil as can be.—Mind, brother Isaac.

I. Fun. I do, I do.

Z. Fun. Hey!—no, t'other side, Mrs. Mechlin.—that's right—I hear, Captain Wilkins—

I. Fun. I knew it was Wilkins.

Z. Fun. Zounds! Isaac, be quiet—Wilkins, that you have taken some liberties about and concerning of me, which, damme, I don't understand—

I. Fun. Don't swear, brother Zachary.

Z. Fun. Did ever mortal hear the like of this fellow.

I. Fun. But you are grown such a reprobate since you went to the wars—

Z. Fun. Mrs. Mechlin, stop the tongue of that blockhead; why, dunce, I am speaking by rule; and Mrs. Mechlin can tell you that duels and dammes go always together.

Mrs. Mech. Oh, always.

Z. Fun. Which, damme, I don't understand. Liberties with you, cries the captain; where, when, and in what manner—Last Friday night, in company at the St. Alban's, you call'd me a buck, and moreover said, that my horns were exalted. Now, Sir, I know very well what was your meaning by that, and therefore demand satisfaction.—That, Sir is what I never deny to a gentleman; but as to you, Mr. Fungus, I can't consent to give you that rank.—How, Sir, do you deny my gentility! Oh, that affront must be answered this instant. Draw, Sir.—Now push, Mrs. Mechlin. [They fence.] There I parry tierce, there I parry carte, there I parry.—Hold, hold, have a care; zooks! Mrs. Mechlin.

I. Fun. Ha, ha; ha! I think you have met with your match—well push'd Mrs. Mechlin.

Z. Fun. Ay, but instead of pushing in tierce, she pushed me in carte, and came so thick with her thrusts, that it was not in nature to parry them.

I. Fun. Well, well, I am fully convinc'd of your skill. But I think, brother Zac. you hinted an intention of marrying; is that your design?

Z. Fun. Undoubtedly.

I. Fun. And when?

Z. Fun. Why, this evening.

I. Fun. So sudden! and pray is it a secret to whom?

Z. Fun. A secret! no, I am proud of the match; she brings me all that I want, her veins full of good blood; such a family! such an alliance! zooks, she has a pedigree as long as the Mall, brother Isaac, with large trees on each side, and all the boughs loaded with lords.

I. Fun. But has the lady no name?

Z. Fun. Name! ay, such a name! lord, we have nothing like it in London: none of your stunted little dwarfish words of one syllable; your Watts, and your Potts, and your Trotts; this rumbles through the throat like a cart with broad wheels. Mrs. Mechlin, you can pronounce it better than me.

Mrs. Mech. Lady Sacharissa Mackirkincroft.

Z. Fun. Kirkincroft! there are a mouthful of syllables for you. Lineally descended from Hercules, Alexander, Charlemagne, Hannibal, Earl of Glendower, prime-minister to King Malcolm the First.

I. Fun. And are all the parties agreed?

Z. Fun. I can't say quite all; for the right honourable peer that is to be my pappa, (who by the bye) is as proud as the devil, has flatly renounc'd the alliance, calls me here in his letter plebeian. and says if we have any children, they will turn out very little better than pye-balls.

I. Fun. And what does the gentlewoman say?
Z. Fun. The gentlewoman! Oh, the gentlewoman, who (between ourselves) is pretty near as high as her father; but, however, my person has prov'd too hard for her pride, and I take the affair to be as good as concluded.

I. Fun. Is it resolv'd?

Z. Fun. Fix'd.

I. Fun. I am sorry for it.

Z. Fun. Why so? come, come, brother Isaac, don't be uneasy, I have a shrewd guess at your grievance; but though you may not be suffer'd to see Lady Scarcasilla at first, yet who knows before long I may have interest enough with her to bring it about; and, in the mean time, you may dine when you will with the steward.

I. Fun. You are exceedingly kind.

Z. Fun. Mrs. Mechlin, you don't think my lady will gainsay it?

Mrs. Mech. By no means; it is wonderful, considering her rank, how mild and condescending she is: why, but yesterday, says her ladyship to me, Though, Mrs. Mechlin, it can't be suppos'd that I should admit any of the Fungus family into my presence—

Z. Fun. No, no, to be sure; not at first, as I said.

Mrs. Mech. Yet his brother, or any other relation, may dine with the servants every day.

Z. Fun. Do you hear, Isaac, there's your true inherent nobility, so humble and affable; but people of real rank never have any pride; that is only for upstarts.

I. Fun. Wonderfully gracious! but here, brother Zac, you mistake me, it is not for myself I am sorry.

Z. Fun. Whom then?

I. Fun. For you. Don't you think that your wife will despise you?

Z. Fun. No.

I. Fun. Can you suppose that you will live together a month?

Z. Fun. Yes.

I. Fun. Why, can you bear to walk about your own house like a paltry dependant?

Z. Fun. No.

I. Fun. To have yourself and your orders condemn'd by your servants?

Z. Fun. No.

I. Fun. To see your property devour'd by your lady's beggarly cousins, who, notwithstanding, won't vouchsafe you a nod?—

Z. Fun. No.

I. Fun. Can you be blind at her bidding, run at her sending, come at her calling, dine by yourself when she has bettermost company, and sleep six nights a week in the garret?

Z. Fun. No.

I. Fun. Why, will you dare to disobey, have the impudence to dispute the sovereign will and pleasure of a lady like her?

Z. Fun. Ay, marry will I.

I. Fun. And don't you expect a whole clan of Andrew Ferraros, with their naked points at your throat?

Z. Fun. No.

I. Fun. Then you don't know half you will have to go through.

Z. Fun. Look you, brother, I know what you would be at; you don't mean I should marry at all.

I. Fun. Indeed, brother Zachary, you wrong me; I should with pleasure see you equally match'd, that is, to one of your own rank and condition.

Z. Fun. You would? I don't doubt it; but that

is a pleasure you never will have. Look you, Isaac, I have made up my mind; it is a lady I like, and a lady I will have; and if you say any more, I'll not be contented with that, for dammee, I'll marry a duchess.

Enter La Fleur.

La Fleur. *Le maître pour donner d'éloquence.*

Z. Fun. What does the puppy say, Mrs. Mechlin, for you know I can't parler vous.

Mrs. Mech. The gentleman from the city, that's to make you a speaker.

Z. Fun. Odzooks! a special fine fellow, let's have him.

Mrs. Mech. *Faites le entres.* [*Exit La Fleur.*]

I. Fun. Brother, as you are busy, I will take another—

Z. Fun. No, no, this is the finest fellow of all, it is he that is to make me a man; and hark ye, brother, if I should chance to rise in the state, no more words, your business is done.

I. Fun. What, I reckon, some member of parliament?

Z. Fun. A member; Lord help you, brother Isaac, this man is a whole senate himself. Why it is the famous oratorian, that has publish'd the book.

I. Fun. What, Mr. Gruel?

Z. Fun. The same.

I. Fun. Yes, I have seen his name in the news.

Z. Fun. His knowledge is wonderful; he has told me such secrets: why do you know, Isaac, by what means 'tis we speak?

I. Fun. Speak! why we speak with our mouths.

Z. Fun. No, we don't.

I. Fun. No!

Z. Fun. No. He says we speak by means of the tongue, the teeth, and the throat; and without them we only should bellow.

I. Fun. But surely the mouth—

Z. Fun. The mouth, I tell you, is little or nothing, only just a cavity for the air to pass through.

I. Fun. Indeed!

Z. Fun. That's all; and when the cavity's small, little sounds will come out; when large, the great ones proceed; observe now in whistling and bawling.—[*Whistles and bawls.*]—Do you see. Oh, he is a marvellous man!

I. Fun. But of what use is all this?

Z. Fun. But it's knowledge, an't it? and of what signification is that, you fool? and then as to use, why he can make me speak in any manner he pleases; as a lawyer, a merchant, a country gentleman; whatever the subject requires—But here he is.

Enter Mr. Gruel.

Mr. Gruel. Your servant; I have been holding forth in your praise.

Gruel. I make no doubt, Mr. Fungus, but to your declamation, or recitation, (as Quintilian more properly terms it) I shall be indebted for much future praise, inasmuch as the reputation of the scholar does (as I may say) confer, or rather, as it were, reflect, a marvellous kind of lustre on the fame of the master himself.

Z. Fun. There, Isaac, didst ever hear the like? he talks just as if it were all out of a book; what would you give to be able to utter such words?

I. Fun. And what should I do with them? them holiday terms would not pass in my shop; there's no buying and selling with them.

Gruel. Your observation is pithy and pertinent; different stations different idioms demand, polished periods accord ill with the mouths of mechanics; but as that tribe is permitted to circulate a base

kind of coin, for the ease and convenience of inferior traffic, so it is indulg'd with a vernacular or vicious vulgar phraseology, to carry on their inter-locutory commerce; but I doubt, Sir, I soar above the region of your comprehension?

I. Fun. Why if you wou'd come down a step or two, I can't say but I shou'd understand you the better.

Z. Fun. And I too.

Gruel. Then to the familiar I fall: if the gentleman has any ambition to shine at a vestry, a common-hall, or even a convivial club, I can supply him with ample materials.

I. Fun. No, I have no such desire.

Gruel. Not to lose time; your brother here, (for such I find the gentleman is) in other respects a common man like yourself—

Z. Fun. No better.

Gruel. Observe how alter'd by means of my art. Are you prepar'd in the speech on the great importance of trade?

Z. Fun. Pretty well, I believe.

Gruel. Let your gesticulations be chaste, and your muscular movements consistent.

Z. Fun. Never fear—

Enter Jenny, and whispers Mrs. Mechlin.

Mrs. Mechlin. You'll stay?
Mrs. Mech. A little business, I'll return in an instant.

[Exit Mrs. Mechlin.]

Gruel. A little here to the left, if you please, Sir, there you will only catch his profile—that's right—now you will have the full force of his face; one, two, three; now off you go.

Z. Fun. When I consider the vast importance of this day's debate; when I revolve the various vicissitudes that this soil has sustain'd; when I ponder what our painted progenitors were; and what we, their civilized successors are; when I reflect, that they fed on crab-apples and chestnuts—

Gruel. Pignuts, good Sir, if you please.

Z. Fun. You are right; crab-apples and pignuts; and that we feast on green-peas, and on custards: when I trace in the recording historical page, that their floods gave them nothing but frogs, and now know we have fish by land-carriage, I am lost in amazement at the prodigious power of commerce. Hail, commerce! daughter of industry, consort to credit, parent of opulence, full sister to liberty, and great-grandmother to the art of navigation—

I. Fun. Why this gentlewoman has a pedigree as long as your wife's, brother Zac.

Z. Fun. Prythee, Isaac, be quiet—art of navigation—a—navigation.—Zooks, that fellow has put me quite out.

Gruel. It matters not; this day's performance has largely fulfill'd your yesterday's promise.

Z. Fun. But I han't half done, the best is to come; let me just give him that part about turnpegs—for the sloughs, the mires, the ruts, the impassable bogs, that the languid, but generous, steed travelled through; he now pricks up his ears, he neighs, he canters, he capers through a whole region of turnpegs.

Enter Mrs. Mechlin.

Mrs. Mech. Your riding-master is below.

Z. Fun. Gadso! then here we must end. You'll pardon me, good Mr. Gruel; for as I want to be a finished gentleman as soon as I can, it is impossible for me to stick long to any one thing.

Gruel. Sir, though your exit is rather abrupt, yet the multiplicity of your avocations do, (as I may say) in some measure, cicatrize the other-

wife mortal wound on this occasion sustained by decorum.

Z. Fun. Cicatrize! I could hear him all day. He is a wonderful man. Well, Mr. Gruel, to-morrow we will at it again.

Gruel. You will find me prompt at your slightest volition.

Z. Fun. I wish, brother Isaac, I could have staid, you should have heard me oration way like a lawyer, about pleadings and precedents, but all in good time.— [Exit Fungus.]

Mrs. Mech. This gentleman, Sir, will gain you vast credit.

Gruel. Yes, Ma'am, the capabilities of the gentleman, I confess, are enormous; and as to you I am indebted for this promising pupil, you will permit me to exonerate the obligation by an instantaneous and gratis lecture on that species of eloquence peculiar to ladies.

Mrs. Mech. Oh, Sir, I have no sort of occasion—

Gruel. As to that biped, man, (for such I define him to be) a male or masculine manner belongs—

Mrs. Mech. Any other time, good Mr. Gruel.

Gruel. So to that biped, woman, the participating of his general nature, the word homo, in Latin, being promiscuously used as woman or man—

Mrs. Mech. For Heaven's sake—

Gruel. But being cast in a more tender and delicate mould—

Mrs. Mech. Sir, I have twenty people in waiting—

Gruel. The soft, supple, insinuating graces—

Mrs. Mech. I must insist—

Gruel. Do appertain, (as I may say) in a more peculiar, or particular, manner—

Mrs. Mech. Nay, then—

Gruel. Her rank, in the order of entities—

Mrs. Mech. I must thrust you out of my house.

Gruel. Not calling her forth—

Mrs. Mech. Was there ever such a—

[Pushing him out.]

Re-enter Gruel.

Gruel. To those eminent, hazardous, and, (as I may say) perilous conflicts, which so often—

Mrs. Mech. Get down stairs, and be hang'd to you. [Pushes him out.] There he goes, as I live, from the top to the bottom; I hope, I han't done him a mischief: You arn't hurt, Mr. Gruel?—No, all's safe; I hear him going on with his speech; an impatient puppy!

I. Fun. Impertinent, indeed. I wonder all those people don't turn your head, Mrs. Mechlin.

Mrs. Mech. Oh, I am pretty well us'd to 'em. But who comes here! Mr. Isaac, if you will step into the next room, I have something to communicate that well deserves your attention.

[Exit Isaac Fungus.]

Enter Simon.

Sim. Doctor Catgut at the foot of the stairs.

Mrs. Mech. The devil he is! What can have brought him at this time of day?—Watch, Simon; that nobody comes up whilst he is here. [Exit Simon.] I hope he has not heard of the pretty present we sent him to day.

Enter Dr. Catgut.

Dr. Cat. Madam Mechlin, your humble. I have, Ma'am, received a couple of compliments from your mansion this morning; one I find from a lodger of yours, the other, I presume, from your niece; but for the last, I rather suppose I am indebted to you.

Mrs. Mech. Me! indeed, Doctor, you are widely mistaken; I assure you, Sir, since your business broke out, I have never set eyes of her once.

Dr. Cat. Then I am falsely informed.

Mrs. Mech. But after all, you must own it is but what you deserve; I wonder, Doctor, you don't leave off these tricks.

Dr. Cat. Why, what can I do, Mrs. Mechlin? my constitution requires it.

Mrs. Mech. Indeed, I should not have thought it.

Dr. Cat. Then the dear little devils are so desperately fond.

Mrs. Mech. Without doubt.

Dr. Cat. And for frolick, flirtation, diligence, dress, and address—

Mrs. Mech. To be sure.

Dr. Cat. For what you call genuine gallantry, few men, I flatter myself, will be found that can match me.

Mrs. Mech. Oh, that's a point given up.

Dr. Cat. Hark ye, Molly Mechlin; let me perish, child, you look divinely to-day.

Mrs. Mech. Indeed!

Dr. Cat. But that I have two or three affairs on my hands, I should be positively tempted to trifle with thee a little.

Mrs. Mech. Ay, but doctor, consider I am not of a trifling age, it would be only losing your time.

Dr. Cat. Ha, so coy! But apropos, Molly; this lodger of yours; who is he, and what does he want?

Mrs. Mech. You have heard of the great Mr. Fungus?

Dr. Cat. Well!

Mrs. Mech. Being informed of your skill and abilities, he has sent for you to teach him to sing.

Dr. Cat. Me teach him to sing! What does the scoundrel mean to affront me?

Mrs. Mech. Affront you!

Dr. Cat. Why, don't you know, child, that I quitted that paltry profession?

Mrs. Mech. Not I.

Dr. Cat. Oh, intirely renounc'd it.

Mrs. Mech. Then what may you follow at present?

Dr. Cat. Me!—nothing. I am a poet, my dear.

Mrs. Mech. A poet!

Dr. Cat. A poet. The muses; you know I was always fond of the ladies: I suppose you have heard of Shakespeare, and Shadwell, of Tom Brown, and of Milton, and Hudibras?

Mrs. Mech. I have.

Dr. Cat. I shall blast all their laurels, by gad; I have just given the public a taste, but there's a belly-full for them in my larder at home.

Mrs. Mech. Upon my word, you surprise me; but pray, is poetry a trade to be learn'd?

Dr. Cat. Doubtless. Capital as I am, I have not acquired it above a couple of years.

Mrs. Mech. And could you communicate your art to another?

Dr. Cat. To be sure. Why I have here in my pocket, my dear, a whole folio of rhymes, from Z quite to great A. Let us see, A, ay, here it begins, A, a, a, pass, grass, mass, lass, and so quite thro' the alphabet down to Z. Zounds, grounds, mounds, pounds, hounds.

Mrs. Mech. And what do you do with those rhymes?

Dr. Cat. Oh, we supply them.

Mrs. Mech. Supply them?

Dr. Cat. Ay, fill them up, as I will shew you. Last week, in a ramble to Dulwich, I made these rhymes into a duet for a new comic opera I have on the stocks. Mind, for I look upon the words as a model for that sort of writing.

First then—*There to see the sluggish ass,*

Through the meadows as we pass,

Eating up the farmer's grass,

Blithe and merry, by the mast,
As a lively country lass.

Mrs. Mech. Very pretty.

Dr. Cat. A'n't it. Then he replies:

Hear the farmer cry out, Zounds!
As he trudges through the grounds,
Tender beast has broke my mounds;
If the parish has no pounds,
Kill, and give him to the bounds.

Then Da Capo, both join in repeating the last stanza; and this tack'd to a tolerable tune, will run you for a couple of months. You observe?

Mrs. Mech. Clearly. As our gentleman is desirous to learn all kinds of things, I can't help thinking but he will take a fancy to this.

Dr. Cat. In that case, he may command me, my dear; and I promise you, in a couple of months, he shall know as much of the matter as I do.

Mrs. Mech. At present he is a little engaged, but as soon as the honey-moon is over—

Dr. Cat. Honey-moon! Why, is he going to be marry'd?

Mrs. Mech. This evening, I fancy.

Dr. Cat. The finest opportunity for an introduction, in nature; I have by me, Ma'am Mechlin, of my own composition, such an epithalamium.

Mrs. Mech. Thalmium, what's that?

Dr. Cat. A kind of an elegy, that we poets compose at the solemnization of weddings.

Mrs. Mech. Oh, ho!

Dr. Cat. It is set to musick already; for I still compose for myself.

Mrs. Mech. You do?

Dr. Cat. Yes. What think you now of providing a band, and serenading the squire to-night? It will be a pretty extempore compliment.

Mrs. Mech. The prettiest thought in the world. But I hear Mr. Fungus's bell. You'll excuse me, dear Doctor, you may suppose we are busy.

Dr. Cat. No apology then; I'll about it this instant.

Mrs. Mech. As soon as you please—Any thing to get you out of the way. [*Afide, and exit.*]

Dr. Cat. Your obsequious, good Madam Mechlin. But notwithstanding all your fine speeches, I shrewdly suspect my blessed bargain at home was a present from you; and what shall I do with it?—These little embarrasses we men of intrigue are eternally subject to. There will be no sending it back. She will never let it enter the house.—Hey! gad, a lucky thought is come into my head—this serenade is finely contrived.—Madam Mechlin shall have her cousin again, for I will return her bye-blow in the body of a double base-viol; so the bawd shall have a concert as well as the squire.

[*Exit Dr. Catgut.*]

ACT III.

SCENE continues.

Enter Harpy, Young Lovett, and Jenny:

Har. TELL your mistress my name is Harpy; she knows me, and how precious my time is.

Jen. Mr. Harpy, the attorney, of Furnival's Inn?

[*Exit Jenny.*]

Har. The same. Ay, ay, young gentleman, this is your woman; I warrant your business is done. You knew Kitty Williams, that marry'd Mr. Abednigo Potiphar, the Jew broker?

T. Lov. I did.

Har. And Robin Rainbow, the happy hus-

band of the widow Champansy, from the isle of St. Kitt's?

Y. Lov. I have seen him.

Har. All owing to her. Her success in that branch of business is wonderful! Why, I dare believe, since last summer, she has not sent off less than forty couple to Edinburgh.

Y. Lov. Indeed! She must be very adroit.

Har. Adroit! You shall judge. I will tell you a case: you know the large brick-house at Peckham, with a turret at top?

Y. Lov. Well.

Har. There liv'd Miss Cicely Mite, the only daughter of old Mite the cheesemonger, at the corner of Newgate street, just turn'd of fourteen, and under the wing of an old maiden aunt, as watchful as a dragon—but hush—I hear Mrs. Mechlin, I'll take another season to finish my tale.

Y. Lov. But, Mr. Harpy, as these kind of women are a good deal given to gossiping, I would rather my real name was a secret till there is a sort of necessity.

Har. Gossiping! She, lord help you, she is as close as a Catholic confessor.

Y. Lov. That may be, but you must give me leave to insist.

Har. Well, well, as you please.

Enter Mrs. Mechlin.

Your very humble servant, good Madam Mechlin; I have taken the liberty to introduce a young gentleman, a friend of mine, to crave your assistance.

Mrs. Mech. Any friend of yours, Mr. Harpy; won't you be seated, Sir.

Y. Lov. Ma'am.

[They sit down.]

Mrs. Mech. And pray, Sir, how can I serve you?

Har. Why, Ma'am, the gentleman's situation is—but, Sir, you had better state your case to Mrs. Mechlin yourself.

Y. Lov. Why, you are to know, Ma'am, that I am just escap'd from the university, where (I need not tell you) you are greatly esteem'd.

Mrs. Mech. Very obliging. I must own, Sir, I have had a very great respect for that learned body, ever since they made a near and dear friend of mine a doctor of music.

Y. Lov. Yes, Ma'am, I remember the gentleman.

Mrs. Mech. Do you know him, Sir? I expect him here every minute to instruct a lodger of mine.

Y. Lov. Not intimately. Just arriv'd, but last night; upon my coming to town I found my father deceas'd, and all his fortune devis'd to his relief, my mother.

Mrs. Mech. What, the whole!

Y. Lov. Every shilling. That is, for her life.

Mrs. Mech. And to what sum may it amount?

Y. Lov. Why, my mother is eternally telling me, that after her, I shall inherit fifty or sixty thousand at least.

Mrs. Mech. Upon my word, a capital sum.

Y. Lov. But of what use, my dear Mrs. Mechlin, since she refuses to advance me a guinea upon the credit of it, and while the grass grows—you know the proverb.—

Mrs. Mech. What, I suppose you want something for present subsistence.

Y. Lov. Just my situation.

Mrs. Mech. Have you thought of nothing for yourself?

Y. Lov. I am resolved to be guided by you.

Mrs. Mech. What do you think of a wife?

Y. Lov. A wife!

Mrs. Mech. Come, come, don't despise my advice; when a young man's finances are low, a wife

is a much better resource than a usurer; and there are in this town a number of kind-hearted widows, that take a pleasure in repairing the injuries done by fortune to handsome young fellows.

Har. Mrs. Mechlin has reason.

Y. Lov. But, dear Ma'am, what can I do with a wife?

Mrs. Mech. Do! Why, like other young fellows who marry ladies a little stricken in years; make her your banker and steward. If you say but the word, before night I'll give you a widow with two thousand a year in her pocket.

Y. Lov. Two thousand a year! a pretty employment, if the residence could but be dispens'd with.

Mrs. Mech. What do you mean by residence? Do you think a gentleman, like a pitiful trader, is to be eternally tack'd to his wife's petticoat: when she is in town, be you in the country; as the shifts do you shift. Why, you need not be with her above thirty days in the year; and let me tell you, you won't find a more easy condition; twelve months subsistence for one month's labour!

Y. Lov. Two thousand a year, you are sure?

Mrs. Mech. The least penny.

Y. Lov. Well, Madam, you shall dispose of me just as you please.

Mrs. Mech. Very well, if you will call in half an hour at farthest, I believe we shall finish the business.

Y. Lov. In half an hour?

Mrs. Mech. Precisely. Oh, dispatch is the very life and soul of my trade. Mr. Harpy will tell you my terms, you will find them reasonable enough.

Har. Oh, I am sure we shall have no dispute about those.

Y. Lov. No, no.—

[Going.]

Mrs. Mech. Oh, but Mr. Harpy, it may be proper to mention that the gentlewoman, the party, is upwards of sixty.

Y. Lov. With all my heart; it is the purse, not the person, I want! Sixty! she is quite a girl; I wish with all my soul she was ninety.

Mrs. Mech. Get you gone, you are a devil, I see that.

Y. Lov. Well, for half an hour, sweet Mrs. Mechlin, adieu. *[Exit Young Lovell and Harpy.]*

Mrs. Mech. So! I have provided for my dowager from Devonshire-square, and now to cater for my Commissary. Here he comes.

Enter Fungus and Bridoun.

Fun. So, in six weeks—Oh, Mrs. Mechlin, any news from the lady?

Mrs. Mech. I expect her here every moment. She is conscious that in this step, she descends from her dignity; but being desirous to screen you from the fury of her noble relations, she is determined to let them see that the act and deed is intirely her own.

Fun. Very kind, very obliging indeed. But, Mrs. Mechlin, as the family is so furious, I reckon we shall never be reconcil'd.

Mrs. Mech. I don't know that. When you have bought commissions for her three younger brothers, discharg'd the mortgage on the paternal estate, and portioned off eight or nine of her sisters, it is not impossible but my lord may be prevail'd on to suffer your name.

Fun. Do you think so?

Mrs. Mech. But then a work of time, Mr. Fungus.

Fun. Ay, ay, I know very well things of that kind are not brought about in a hurry.

Mrs. Mech. But I must prepare matters for the lady's reception.

Fun. By all means. The jewels are sent to her ladyship?

Mrs. Mech. To be sure.

Fun. And the ring for her ladyship, and her ladyship's licence?

Mrs. Mech. Ay, ay, and her ladyship's parson too; all are prepar'd.

Fun. Parson! why won't her ladyship please to be marry'd at Powl's?

Mrs. Mech. Lord, Mr. Fungus, do you think a lady of her rank and condition would bear to be seen in public at once with a person like you?

Fun. That's true, I——

Mrs. Mech. No, no; I have sent to Dr. Tickle-text, and the business will be done in the parlour below.

Fun. As you and her ladyship please, good Mrs. Mechlin.

Mrs. Mech. You will get dress'd as soon as you can.

Fun. I shall only take a short lesson from Mr. Bridoun, and then wait her ladyship's pleasure. Mrs. Mechlin, may my brother be by?

Mrs. Mech. Ay, ay, provided his being so is kept a secret from her.

Fun. Never fear.——[*Exit Mrs. Mechlin.* Well, Mr. Bridoun, and you think I am mended a little——

Brid. A great deal.

Fun. And that in a month or six weeks I may be able to prance upon a long-tail'd horse in Hyde-park, without any danger of falling?

Brid. Without doubt.

Fun. It will be vast pleasant, in the heat of the day, to canter along the King's-road, side by side with the ladies, in the thick of the dust; but that I must not hope for this summer.

Brid. I don't know that, if you follow it close.

Fun. Never fear: I shan't be sparing of——But come, come, let us get to our business——John, have the carpenters brought home my new horse?

Enter John.

John. It is here, Sir, upon the top of the stairs.

Fun. Then fetch it in, in an instant. [*Exit John.*] What a deal of time and trouble there goes, Mr. Bridoun, to the making a gentleman. And do your gentlemen born, now, (for I reckon you have had of all sorts) take as much pains as we do?

Brid. To be sure; but they begin at an earlier age.

Fun. There is something in that; I don't know but they might be apter, more cuter, now, in catching their learning.

Brid. Dispositions do certainly differ.

Fun. Ay, ay, something in water, I warrant; as they say the children of blackamoors will swim as soon as they come into the world.

Enter Servants with a wooden-horse.

Oh, here he is, Ods me! It is a stately, fine beast. *Brid.* Here, my lady, place it here——very well, where's your switch, Mr. Fungus?

Fun. I have it.

Brid. Now let me see you vault nimbly into your seat. Zounds! you are not on the wrong side, Mr. Fungus?

Fun. I am so, indeed, but we'll soon rectify that. Now we are right: may I have leave to lay hold of the mane?

Brid. If you can't mount him without.

Fun. I will try; but this steed is so devilish tall——Mr. Bridoun, you don't think he'll throw me?

Brid. Never fear.

Fun. Well, if he shou'd he can't kick, that's one comfort, however.

Brid. Now mind your position.

Fun. Stay till I recover my wind.

Brid. Let your head be erect.

Fun. There.

Brid. And your shoulders fall easily back.

Fun. Ho——there.

Brid. Your switch perpendicular in your right hand——Your right——that is it, your left to the bridle.

Fun. There.

Brid. Your knees in, and your toes out.

Fun. There.

Brid. Are you ready?

Fun. When you will.

Brid. Off you go.

Fun. Don't let him gallop at first.

Brid. Very well; preserve your position.

Fun. I warrant.

Brid. Does he carry you easy?

Fun. All the world like a cradle. But, Mr. Bridoun, I go at a wonderful rate.

Brid. Mind your knees.

Fun. Ay, ay, I can't think but this here horse stands still very near as fast as another can gallop.

Brid. Mind your toes.

Fun. Ho, stop the horse, Zounds! I'm out of the stirrups, I can't sit him no longer; there I go. [*Falls off.*]

Brid. I hope you ar'n't hurt?

Fun. My left hip has a little confusion.

Brid. A trifle, quite an accident; it might happen to the very best rider in England.

Fun. Indeed!

Brid. We have such things happen every day at the manege; but you are vastly improv'd.

Fun. Why I am grown bolder a little; and, Mr. Bridoun, when do you think I may venture to ride a live horse?

Brid. The very instant you are able to keep your seat on a dead one——

Enter Mrs. Mechlin.

Mrs. Mech. Bless me, Mr. Fungus, how you are trifling your time! I expect Lady Sacharissa every moment, and see what a trim you are in.

Fun. I beg pardon, good Madam Mechlin. I'll be equip'd in a couple of minutes; where will her ladyship please to receive?

Mrs. Mech. In this room, to be sure; come, stir, stir.

Fun. I have had a little fall from my horse—I'll go as fast as I——Mr. Bridoun, will you lend me a lift? [*Enter Fungus and Bridoun.*]

Mrs. Mech. There——Jenny, show Mrs. Lovett in here——Who's there——

Enter Servants.

Pray move that piece of lumber out of the way. Come, come, make haste. Madam, if you'll step in here for a moment.

Enter Mrs. Lovett.

Mrs. Lov. So, so, Mrs. Mechlin; well, you see I am true to my time; and how have you throve, my good woman?

Mrs. Mech. Beyond expectations.

Mrs. Lov. Indeed! And have you provided a party?

Mrs. Mech. Ay, ay, and such a party, you might search the town round before you cou'd meet with his fellow: he'll suit you in every respect.

Mrs. Lov. As how, as how, my dear woman?

Mrs. Mech. A gentleman by birth and by breeding, none of your little whipper-snapper Jacks, but a countenance as comely, and a presence as portly! he has one fault indeed, if you can but overlook that.

Mrs. Lov. What is it?

Mrs. Mech. His age.

Mrs. Lov. Age! how, how?

Mrs. Mech. Why, he is rather under your mark, I am afraid; not above twenty at most.

Mrs. Lov. Well, well, so he answers in every thing else, we must overlook that; for, Mrs. Mechlin, there is no expecting perfection below.

Mrs. Mech. True, Ma'am.

Mrs. Lov. And where is he?

Mrs. Mech. I look for him every minute; if you will but step into the drawing-room, I have given him such a picture, that I am sure he is full as impatient as you.

Mrs. Lov. My dear woman, you are so kind and obliging: but, Mrs. Mechlin, how do I look? don't flatter me, do you think my figure will strike him?

Mrs. Mech. Or he must be blind.

Mrs. Lov. You may just hint black don't become me, that I am a little paler of late; the loss of a husband one loves will cause an alteration, you know.

Mrs. Mech. True; oh, he will make an allowance for that.

Mrs. Lov. But things will come round in a trice.

[*Exit Mrs. Lovett.*]

Enter Simon.

Sim. Madam, Miss Dolly is dizen'd out, and every thing ready.

Mrs. Mech. Let her wait for the Commissary here, I will introduce him the instant he is dress'd.

[*Exit Mrs. Mechlin.*]

Sim. Miss Dolly, you may come in, your aunt will be here in an instant.

Enter Dolly and Jenny.

Dolly. Hush, Simon, hush; to your post.

Sim. I am gone— [*Exit Simon.*]

Dolly. Well, Jenny, and have I the true quality air?

Jen. As perfectly, Ma'am, as if you had been bred to the business; and for figure, I defy the first of them all. For my part, I think Mr. Fungus very well off; when the secret comes out I don't see what right he has to be angry.

Dolly. Oh, when once he is noos'd, let him struggle as much as he will, the cord will be drawn only the tighter.

Jen. Ay, ay, we may trust to your management. I hope, Miss, I shall have the honour to follow your fortunes; there will be no bearing this house, when once you have left it.

Dolly. No, Jenny, it would be barbarous to rob my aunt of so useful a second; besides, for mistress and maid, we rather know one another a little too well.

Jen. Indeed! but here comes Mr. Fungus; remember distance and dignity.

Dolly. I warrant you, wench.

Jen. So, I see what I have to hope. Our young filly seems to be secure of her match; but I may jostle her the wrong side the post: we will have a trial, however, but I must see and find out the brother.

Enter Z. Fungus, and Mrs. Mechlin.

Fun. Yes, scarlet is vastly becoming, and takes very much with the ladies; quite proper too, as I have been in the army.

Mrs. Mech. Stay where you are till you are announc'd to the lady. Mr. Fungus begs leave to throw himself at your ladyship's feet.

Dolly. The mon may dra nigh.

Mrs. Mech. Approach.

Fun. One, two, three, ha! Will that do?

Mrs. Mech. P. etty well.

Fun. May I begin to make love?

Mrs. Mech. When you will.

Fun. Now stand my friend, Mr. Gruel. But she has such a deal of dignity that she dashes me quite.

Mrs. Mech. Courage.

Fun. Here, hold the paper to prompt me in case I should stumble—Madam, or, May it please your ladyship, When I preponderate the grandeur of your high ginnyalogys and the mercantile meanness of my dingy descent; when I consider that your ancestors, like Admiral Anson, sail'd all round the world in the ark; and that it is a matter of doubt whether I ever had any forefathers or no; I totter, I tremble, at the thoughts of my towering ambition—Ah—, is not Phaeton next?—

Mrs. Mech. Hey!—[*Looking at the paper.*] No, Luna.

Fun. Right;—ambition—dignity how debas'd, distance, how great; it is as if the link shou'd demand an alliance with Luna; or the bushy-bramble court the boughs of the stately Scotch fir; it is as if—What's next?

Mrs. Mech. Next—hey!—I have lost the place I am afraid—Come, come, enough has been said; you have shew'd the sense you entertain of the honour. Upon these occasions, a third person is fittest to cut matters short. Your ladyship hears that—

Dolly. Yes, yes; I keen weel enough what the mon wou'd be at. Mrs. Mechlin has spear'd like things in your great commendations, Mr. Fungus, that I cannot but say I clik'd a fancy to you from the very beginning.

Fun. Much oblig'd to Mrs. Mechlin, indeed, please your la'ship.

Dolly. You ken I am of as auncient a family as any North Briton can boast.

Fun. I know it will full well, please your la'ship.

Dolly. And that I shall get the ill-will of a' my kin by this match.

Fun. I am sorry for that, please your la'ship.

Dolly. But after the ceremony it will be proper to withdraw from town for a short space o'time.

Fun. Please your la'ship, what your la'ship pleases.

Dolly. In order to gi that gossip, Scandal, just time to tire her tongue.

Fun. True, your la'ship.

Dolly. I mun expect that the folk will mak' free wi' my character in choosing like a consort as you.

Fun. And with me too, please your la'ship.

Dolly. Wi' you, mon?

Mrs. Mech. Hold your tongue.

Dolly. Donna you think the honour will dra' mickle envy upon you.

Fun. Oh, to be sure, please your la'ship. I did not mean that.

Dolly. Weel, I say we'll gang into the country.

Fun. As soon as your la'ship pleases; I have a sweet house hard by Reading.

Dolly. You ha'; that's right.

Fun. One of the most pleasantest places that can be again.

Dolly. Ha' you a good prospect?

Fun. Twenty stage-coaches drive every day by the door, besides carts and gentlemen's carriages.

Dolly. Ah, that will—

Mrs. Mech. Oh, your ladyship will find all things prepar'd: in the next room the attorney waits with the writings.

Fun. The honour of your l'ship's hand—

Dolly. Maister Fungus, you're a little too hasty.

[*Exit Dolly.*]

Mrs. Mech. Not till after the nuptials; you must not expect to be too familiar at first.

Fun. Pray, when do you think we shall bring the bedding about?

Mrs. Mech. About the latter end of the year, when the winter sets in.

Fun. Not before!

Enter Young Loveit, basily.

Y. Lov. I hope, Madam Mechlin, I have not exceeded my hour; but I expected Mr. Harpy would call.

Mrs. Mech. He is in the next room with a lady. Oh, Mr. Fungus, this gentleman is ambitious of obtaining the nuptial benediction from the same hands after you.

Fun. He's heartily welcome: what, and is his wife a woman of quality too?

Mrs. Mech. No, no, a cit; but monstrously rich; but your lady will wonder—

Fun. Ay, ay, but you'll follow; for I shan't know what to say to her when we are alone.

[*Exit Fungus.*]

Mrs. Mech. I will send you, Sir, your spouse in an instant: the gentlewoman is a widow, so you may throw in what raptures you please.

Y. Lov. Never fear. [*Exit Mrs. Mechlin.*—] And yet this scene is so new, how to acquit myself.

—let me recollect—some piece of a play now.

"'Vouchsafe divine perfection'—No, that won't do for a dowager; it is too humble and whining. But see, the door opens, so I have no time for rehearsal—I have it—

"Clasp'd in the folds of love I'll meet my doom,

"And act my"—

Enter Mrs. Loveit.

Mrs. Lov. Hahl!

Y. Lov. By all that's monstrous, my mother!

Mrs. Lov. That rebel my son, as I live!

Y. Lov. The quotation was quite apropos; had it been a little darker, I might have reviv'd the story of Oedipus.

Mrs. Lov. So, Sirrah, what makes you from your studies?

Y. Lov. A small hint I receiv'd of your inclinations brought me here, Ma'am, in order to prevent, if possible, my father's fortune from going out of the family.

Mrs. Lov. Your father? how dare you disturb his dear ashes? you know well enough how his dear memory melts me; and that at his very name my heart is ready to break.

Y. Lov. Well said, my old matron of Ephesus.

Mrs. Lov. That is what you want, you disobedient unnatural monster; but compleat, accomplish your cruelty: send me the same road your villainies forc'd your father to take.

Enter Mrs. Mechlin.

Mrs. Mech. Hey-day! What the deuce have we here; our old lady in tears!

Mrs. Lov. Disappointed a little; that's all.

Mrs. Mech. Pray, Ma'am, what can occasion—

Mrs. Lov. Lord bless me, Mrs. Mechlin, what a blunder you have made!

Mrs. Mech. A blunder! as how?

Mrs. Lov. Do you know who you have brought me?

Mrs. Mech. Not perfectly.

Mrs. Lov. My own son! that's all.

Mrs. Mech. Your son!

Mrs. Lov. Ay, that rebellious, unsaturnal—

Mrs. Mech. Blunder indeed! But who could have thought it; why, by your account, Ma'am, I imagin'd your son was a child scarce out of his frocks.

Mrs. Lov. Here's company coming, so my reputation will be blasted for ever.

Mrs. Mech. Never fear, leave the care on't to me.

Enter Fungus and Dolly.

Fun. What is the matter? you make such a noise, there is no such thing as minding the writings.

Mrs. Mech. This worthy lady, an old friend of mine, not having set eyes on her son since the death of his father; and being apprised by me, that here he might meet with him, came with a true paternal affection to give him a little wholesome advice.

Mrs. Lov. Well said, Mrs. Mechlin.

Mrs. Mech. Which the young man returned in a way so brutal and barbarous, that his poor mother—be comforted, Ma'am; you had better repose on my bed.

Mrs. Lov. Any where to get out of his sight.

Mrs. Mech. Here, Jenny.

Mrs. Lov. Do you think you can procure me another party.

Mrs. Mech. Never doubt it.

Mrs. Lov. Ugh, ugh— [*Exit coughing.*]

Mrs. Mech. Bear up a little, Ma'am.

Fun. Eye upon you, you have thrown the old gentlewoman into the stericks.

Y. Lov. Sir!

Fun. You a man, you are a scandal, a shame to your sect.

Enter Dr. Catgut.

Dr. Cat. Come, come, Mrs. Mechlin, are the couple prepar'd; the fiddles are tun'd, the bows ready rosin'd, and the whole band—Oh, you, Sir, are one party I reckon, but where is the—Ah, Dolly, what are you here, my dear?

Dolly. Soh?

Fun. Dolly! Who the devil can this be?

Dr. Cat. As nice and as spruce too! the bride-maid, I warrant? why you look as blooming, you slut.

Fun. What can this be? hack ye, Sir!

Dr. Cat. Well, Sir.

Fun. Don't you think you are rather too familiar with a lady of her rank and condition?

Dr. Cat. Rank and condition: what, Dolly?

Fun. Dolly! what a plague possesses the man; this is no Dolly, I tell you.

Dr. Cat. No!

Fun. No, this is Lady Scrararissa Mackirkinkerscroft.

Dr. Cat. Who?

Fun. Descended from the old, old, old Earl of Glendowery.

Dr. Cat. What she, Dolly Mechlin?

Fun. Dolly Devil, the man's out of his wits, I believe.

Enter Mrs. Mechlin.

Oh, Mrs. Mechlin, will you set this matter to rights?

Mrs. Mech. How, Dr. Catgut!

Fun. The strangest fellow here has danc'd up stairs, and has Dolly, Dolly, Dolly'd my lady; who the plague can he be?

Dr. Cat. Oh, apropos, Molly Mechlin, what is this the man that is to be married? the marriage will never hold good; why he is more frantic and madder—

Fun. Mad! John, fetch me the foils; I'll carry and tierce you, you scoundrel.

Enter Isaac Fungus, and Jenny.

I. Fun. Where's brother, it a'n't over; you be'n't marry'd, I hope?

Z. Fun. No, I believe not; why, what is the—

I. Fun. Pretty hands you are got into!—Your servant, good Madam; what this is the person, I warrant; ay, how pretty the puppet is painted? do you know who she is?

Z. Fun. Who she is? without doubt.

I. Fun. No you don't, brother Zac. only the spawn of that devil incarnate, dress out as—

Z. Fun. But hark ye, Isaac, are—don't be in a hurry—are you sure—

I. Fun. Sure—the girl of the house, abhorring their scandalous project, has freely confessed the whole scheme. Jenny, stand forth, and answer boldly to what I shall ask; is not this wench the woman's niece of the house?

Jen. I fancy, she will hardly deny it.

I. Fun. And is not this mistress of yours a most profligate—

Mrs. Meck. Come, come, Master Isaac, I will save you the trouble, and cut this matter short in an instant—well then, this girl, this Dolly, is my niece; and what then?

Z. Fun. And ar'n't you asham'd?

Y. Low. She asham'd? I wou'd have told you, but I cou'd not get you to listen; why she brought me here to marry my mother.

Z. Fun. Marry your mother! Lord have mercy on us, what a monster! to draw a young man in to be guilty of incest. But hark ye, brother Isaac.

[They retire.]

Dr. Cat. Gad's my life, what a sweet project I

have help'd to destroy; but come, Dolly, I'll piece thy broken fortunes again; thou hast a good pretty voice, I'll teach thee a thrill and a shake, perch thee amongst the boughs at one of the gardens; and then as a mistress, which, as the world goes, is a much better station than that of a wife, not the proudest of them all—

Mrs. Meck. Mistress! no, no, we have not managed our matters so badly. Hark ye, Mr. Commissary.

Z. Fun. Well, what do you want?

Mrs. Meck. Do you propose to consummate your nuptials?

Z. Fun. That's a pretty question, indeed.

Mrs. Meck. You have no objection then to paying the penalty, the contract here that Mr. Harpy has drawn.

Z. Fun. The contract, hey, brother Isaac.

I. Fun. Let me see it.

Mrs. Meck. Soft you there, my maker of candles, it is as well where it is; but you need not doubt of it's goodness: I promise you the best advice has been taken.

Z. Fun. What a damn'd fiend; what a harpy!

Mrs. Meck. And why so, my good master Fungus; is it because I have practis'd that trade by retail which you have carried on in the gross? What injury do I do the world? I feed on their follies, 'tis true; and the game, the plunder, is fair; but the fangs of you and your tribe,

A whole people have felt, and for ages will feel:

To their candour and justice I make my appeal;

Tho' a poor humble scourge in a national cause,

As I trust I deserve, I demand your applause.

[Exeunt omnes.]



The first of the series of lectures was given by Mr. J. H. ...
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The thirty-ninth lecture was given by Mr. J. H. ...
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The forty-second lecture was given by Mr. J. H. ...
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The fiftieth lecture was given by Mr. J. H. ...

7 MA 55